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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN'S WHO BID, TAIWAN POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENT, U.S.-JAPAN SECURITY PACT

1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies continued to focus news coverage May 16 on Taiwan's setback in its bid to join the World Health Organization (WHO); on the new cabinet to be headed by Straits Exchange Foundation Chairman Chang Chun-hsiung; on the island's Han Kuang No. 23 military exercise; and on other local issues. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" satirized Taiwan's WHO bid, saying it was a worthy attempt for the DPP after all, as whatever the DPP government has missed in its diplomatic attempt, it will gain it back domestically. An editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times," on the other hand, urged the government to try harder for its bid to join international organization. An editorial in the critical-of-the-government "China Times" criticized the Chen Shui-bian government for working against the international trend and reality in its WHO bid. An op-ed in the same paper discussed Frank Hsieh's role as the DPP presidential candidate and the DPP government's cross-Straits policy. The article said that if Hsieh could influence President Chen to resume dialogue with Beijing, it will be conducive for Taiwan's economic growth and Taipei-Washington ties. An op-ed in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" discussed the U.S.-Japan security pact and said "Taiwan's long-stalled arms procurement package has weakened its ability to defend itself." End summary.

2. Taiwan's WHO Bid

A) "Diplomacy That Hits One's Head against the Wall"

Columnist Antonio Chiang commented in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (5/16):

"... Taiwan has been attempting to obtain observer status at the World Health Assembly (WHA) using the nomenclature of 'health entity' for the past ten years. But despite its enduring humiliation and insults, the island has yet to see any concrete results. Taiwan changed its strategy this year and applied for membership in the World Health Organization (WHO) using the name 'Taiwan.' Taiwan citizens can barely tell the difference between WHA and WHO, but the failed attempt this year was more like a simple and clear-cut death compared to the slow and painful dying process for the island's WHO bid using the nomenclature of 'health entity.' In addition, this year's failure can offer [the government] a chance to make an issue of it during its campaigning and for its future referendum. Whatever [the government] has missed in its diplomatic attempt, it will gain it back domestically, anyway, so it was a worthy attempt for the DPP after all. ..."

B) Taiwan Should Bravely Speak up [for Itself] to Break China's Containment in the International Community"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 500,000] editorialized (5/16):

"... It is a real pity that pro-Blue people echo China in its united-front tactics against Taiwan; they imposed pressure on our government to accept everything that is unfavorable for the Taiwan people through folk dramas like the KMT-CPC forum. Pan-Blue people say it out loud in Taiwan that they safeguard the Republic of China, but when going abroad, they start to join hands with the Communist Party of China to restrain Taiwan or even the ROC, working jointly with their erstwhile enemies to pursue ultimate unification. In this context, pan-Blue legislators have been trying hysterically to block the arms procurement package that Taiwan needs desperately. Pan-Blue legislators also overlooked the fact that the general budget [for the central government] remains stalled, and they visit China in groups to show off the united-front tactics. ...

"Taiwan is a democratic country whose sovereignty belongs to its people. In the face of China's containment in the international community, Taiwan should speak up for itself bravely. The island's bid to join the WHO and its other attempts over the past few years have demonstrated its determination to the world and have thus gained more and more resonance and support. The setback at the WHA this year reminded us that we need to work harder. All the more, the Taiwan people need to elect legislators and a president who will safeguard the island and pursue our dignity in the international community for our 23 million people. ..."

C) "Taiwan's Distance with WHO Is Getting Wider"

The critical-of-the-government "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (5/16):

"... Foreign relations are unlike internal issues, anyway, and most of the variables are not in Taiwan's control. In the face of Beijing's suppression, Taiwan is in an unfavorable position in the international community; in particular, it has limited bargaining chips and thus can hardly control the situation. The most DEVELOPMENT, U.S.-JAPAN SECURITY PACT

reasonable approach that Taiwan should adopt is to be realistic, to take advantage of the [international] trend, and to choose the most pragmatic and effective survival strategy. But what the Chen Shui-bian administration has been doing is completely the opposite. The international reality is that China is rising rapidly and has increasing bargaining chips to lure away Taiwan's diplomatic allies, while the United States is caught in the quagmire of the war in Iraq and is thus unwilling to engage in any conflict with Beijing over cross-Straits issues. In contrast, Chen's approach over the past few years has been constantly to step on the red line across the Taiwan Strait, starting from calls for 'one country on either side of the Taiwan Strait,' 'name-change,' 'cessation of the National Unification Council,' to the recent 'Four Wants.' He not only did not value the long-term friendly relationship and mutual trust between Taiwan and the United States, but he also failed to put himself in the shoes of Taiwan's allies and gave Washington the feeling that its goodwill has been abused or taken advantage of. What's worse is that Taiwan has thus been viewed as a troublemaker, sabotaging security in the Asia-Pacific region. The United States, as a result, proactively defined a circle [for Taiwan] and joined hands with Beijing to 'manage' the Taiwan issue. Any rash moves by Taiwan heedless of the international reality will face more stringent restrictions than before to avoid [Taiwan] creating more trouble for the United States. ..."

13. Taiwan Political Development

"Turning Point for Reconciliation and Co-existence between the Two Sides of the Taiwan Strait?"

Edward Chen, professor of Tamkang University's Graduate Institute of American Studies, opined in the critical-of-the-government "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (5/16):

"... Evidently, under the strong influence of Frank Hsieh, the new cabinet to be headed by Chang Chun-hsiung will be the DPP's strongest-ever 'cross-Straits cabinet.' All the more, the DPP government's cross-Straits policy will likely be tilted toward 'reconciliation and co-existence.' ... Third, over the past three years, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and State Department

officials have repeatedly expressed their hope that Taiwan will resume dialogue with mainland China. Their intention is that they do not want to see Taiwan absent from the process of economic and trade coordination in the Asia-Pacific region or being increasingly marginalized. If Hsieh could influence Chen Shui-bian to push for the resumption of cross-Strait dialogue, it will not only be conducive for [the island's] economic growth but will also help to improve Washington-Taipei ties.

"Fourth, over the past year, AIT Taipei Director Stephen Young has said more than once in his lectures that he hopes to see both sides of the Taiwan Strait start direct transportation, and he even linked the direct transportation with the talks of U.S.-Taiwan Free Trade Agreement. If Hsieh could urge Chen to conclude talks over cross-Strait direct transportation, he could then ask Young to fulfill his promise of starting talks between Taipei and Washington over the Free Trade Agreement. ..."

14. U.S.-Japan Security Pact

"The Arms Bill and the US-Japan Alliance"

Shen Chieh, a U.S.-based freelance journalist, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (5/16):

"... The US and Japan employ a two-pronged strategic approach to cope with China's rise: They use military deterrence coupled with political and diplomatic means to influence China to move toward positive, constructive development. The military deterrence has not changed, but the diplomatic approach aimed at inducing China to play a responsible international role shows changes in terms of rewards and punishment. ... Nevertheless, diplomatic pressure alone is not likely to transform China into a peaceful and responsible nation. The US and Japan have therefore maintained strong military deterrents to contain China, but Taiwan's long-stalled arms procurement package has weakened its ability to defend itself.

"It was no coincidence that American Institute in Taiwan Director Stephen Young voiced Washington's concerns over the arms bill after the US-Japan meeting was over. The continued delay of the arms-procurement bill in the legislature has caused the US to doubt Taiwan's will to defend itself. The US is also concerned that Taiwan may relinquish its own defense responsibility, which could lead to a military imbalance and enhance risks for across the Strait."

YOUNG